

ThriveED/JCEDC

2022 Plan of Work

Calendar year 2021 input revealed a desire to address several community development related gaps which the organization cannot address given the current level of resources available. Ongoing work in 2022 will include addressing options to provide the desired assistance and may result in a revision to the Strategic Plan.

This plan of work reflects the goals in the draft 2022-2026 Strategic Plan and includes work to be done by staff to the organization, as well as by the members of the JCEDC/ThriveED Boards of Directors and/or Working Committees.

This document is organized to delineate the actual tasks to be completed by Staff and Board, to accomplish the desired outcomes in the Plan of Work.

2022 Workplan Goals:

1. Grow Business Investments in greater Jefferson County
2. Grow community competitiveness
3. Retain existing primary industry sector businesses in greater Jefferson County
4. Provide relevant data to help communities and businesses access resources associated with economic development activities
5. Retain and grow the investor base
6. Strengthen the worker pipeline
7. Deliver homebuyer/homeowner support services*
8. Deliver the Housing Development Services to municipalities**

*JeffCo Homebuyer Program offered by JCEDC

**Delivery of Housing services program dependent upon WEDC funding

To accomplish these outcomes, we've outlined strategic initiatives and tasks that are aligned with the above and with the goals in the Strategic Plan.

I. Business Development Work:

Strategic Initiative: *Enhance Community Competitiveness*

This initiative will be **Board -driven**. ThriveED has designated Working Committees of the Board (public sector leaders are invited to be part of these committees). To strengthen community competitiveness, the Product Improvement Working Committee, will develop a strategy for working with individual municipalities; based upon data collected by staff and input from municipal leaders. The work will highlight policies and/or procedures in place that affect a community's competitiveness and identify best practices to support enhancing the community's ability to compete for business investment opportunities.

Tactics to enhance community competitiveness may include: **(Staff)**

- Documenting water, wastewater, natural gas and high-load electricity capacity of industrial sites/buildings in each community
- Enhancing incentive tools available to support business growth and/or offset non-competitive costs of doing business
- Identifying best practices for streamlining the costs/timelines associated with the permitting processes
- Efforts to promote creation of development corridors, which includes promoting consistency in zoning language (i.e., "manufacturing" meaning the same thing anywhere in the corridor.)

Objective: *Attraction:* Tactics/Activities: **(Staff)**

- Retain a comprehensive and validated sites/buildings database
- Ensure accuracy of correlated data points in website, that are necessary for communities to pull profile data sheets/sell sheets
- Maintain accurate overlay maps of all TID's, all OZ's or any other incentive-focused overlay, in the site and building database
- Maintain current Mill Rate data for all communities (tied to sites & buildings)

- Deliver professional management/assistance to all business customers and to municipalities related to investment opportunities.
- Engage in aggressive sales tactics
- Professionally market and manage the JeffCo Revolving Loan Fund

Outreach/Attraction Tactics/Activities:

1. Implement campaigns to promote local assets/resources to key businesses within a 3-hour drive from 26/94 intersection.
2. Implement campaigns/consistent outreach to drive traffic to the ThriveED.org website.
3. Partner whenever possible to develop content for distribution or placement in partner industry channels.
4. Build/broaden relationships with Corporate Real Estate Executives and Site Selectors to expand investment opportunities in greater JeffCo.
5. Partner with existing businesses or trade associations to attend trade shows as resources allow

Objective: *Retain Existing Primary Industry Sector Businesses and Support their Growth:* This work includes:

- Continuing refinement of targets and continuous outreach to build stronger relationships and set up visits;
- Ongoing aggregate reporting of contacts or visits made to businesses in a manner that retains confidentiality.
- Quarterly reporting to communities on key points from businesses visited/touched

Measures of Success:

- Increase of opportunities on pipeline report year over year
- Increase in number of BRE visits year over year
- Opportunity Pipeline Reports to Boards at all meetings
- Increased use of county or municipal revolving loan funds
- Quarterly Reports by municipality re:
 - Number of businesses touched (calls, emails, etc)
 - Number of businesses visited
 - Trends (growth/contraction) data from activity

II. Workforce/Business Retention/Business Attraction/Enhancing Competitiveness Initiatives

Survey responses and staff input all point to a critical need to address the area's lack of workers to retain existing employers; to attract new employers and to promote our region as competitive.

Objective: *Strengthen efforts to ensure an ongoing pipeline of local workers to meet existing businesses' growth demands over time.*

Proposal:

Continue to lead the work necessary to develop the Heartland Talent Initiative Pilot program (to prove effectiveness and scalability. The initiative will link primary industry sector businesses with area K-12 institutions within the businesses' labor basin area (i.e., may be a 20-mile radius) AND Link K-12 students with ALL career opportunities that exist within their commutation area (i.e., may be a 20-mile radius). Ultimate Goal is to have a robust alliance between schools and businesses to enhance:

- *Business to student connections. Help businesses connected to and establish relationships with their primary supplier of future workers: the K-12 population of students. Build relationships with student's families and educators in their labor basin.*
- *Student to business connections and Career Awareness: Enable K-12 students to understand the plethora of career options that exist close to home; and build relationships with area businesses that can lead to apprenticeships, internships and employment.*

Launch Heartland Talent initiative in Lake Mills Work is underway to inventory career opportunities and align these with minimum education levels necessary to enter profession. along with prevailing wage data. Staff is working with UW-Whitewater FERC on building inventory.

- List of employers shared; outreach has begun to document career opportunities.
- Inventory of career data will be compiled.
- Staff will continue the work with the Lake Mills School District (LMSD) to ensure:

- Career inventory data is brought into the classrooms;
- Area employers are able to work with LMSD to expand opportunities for employer tours; to promote YA opportunities; bring more business representatives into the classrooms to talk about careers close to home, etc.
- A list of primary contacts at businesses interested in promoting career opportunities to students is widely shared with students;
- A list of primary contacts at LMSD is shared with area businesses to get more engaged in future worker pipeline development opportunities.

Accessing Workers: The number one issue driving new business investments is access to workers. There is increased interest in reaching deeper into the working aged populations in the region, especially the Hispanic population of Jefferson County. Another issue is to address the process many businesses use to hire; by bringing in expertise to help businesses revise their hiring processes.

Proposal:

- A) Spearhead efforts to bring more information about area career opportunities to the Hispanic community by partnering with agencies/organizations that work primarily with this population.
- B) Continue working with providers like Chris Czarnik (Winning the War for Talent) to provide education sessions to area employers on methods they can use to enhance their ability to attract workers.

III. Branding/Marketing/Communications Work: ONGOING

All work under this section is designed to support the 2022 Plan of Work Goals

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Objective: Support Business Development & Workforce Development Goals

Business Development Activities:

- Update existing and develop new marketing materials to reflect new service territory as Greater Jefferson County
- Capture and use current, compelling labor and demographic data about the region from trusted sources (BLS, ESRI, et al), to be used to share the story and increase opportunities for investment from existing and prospective businesses
- Promote Jefferson County Revolving Loan Fund and other programs created to assist businesses
- Implement campaigns to promote local assets/resources to key businesses within a 3-hour drive from 26/94 intersection
- Highlight one available site or building per month for promotion on website and through other channels
- Identify possible alternatives or upgrades to LOIS sites and buildings database, to enhance market penetration of products available
- Keep all data and content on thriveED.org relevant, current, and fresh. Site is three years old; best practices advise a full refresh of the entire site. Update will also include revisions to reflect new service territory as Greater Jefferson County
- Stay abreast of business ownership changes, etc. and continuously update business attraction lists.
- Market to targeted businesses using a multitude of tactics, with the goal of driving traffic to thriveED.org or contacting our office. Tactics include:
 - Social media, MailChimp and direct mail
 - Hard copy materials used by BD team at meetings with CRE's, site selectors and with business attraction targets

Workforce Development Activities:

- Host Winning the War for Talent half-day workshop to connect employers with internationally known expert on talent attraction
- Promote Heartland Talent Initiative to students and employers in pilot project's geography
 - Compile and aggregate career data for students
 - Facilitate connections between pilot school district and employers

Objective: Build awareness of Thrive ED's services and position the staff as Subject Matter Experts

Activities:

- Work with local outlets to arrange for staff to appear on radio show, podcast or get interviewed for articles
- Host up to four Conversations with ThriveED events to raise awareness of ThriveED services and opportunities to become an investor
- Present quarterly to community organizations about local economic development efforts and status
- Implement "Ask An Economic Developer" program, which will allow business reps to automatically book appointments with staff
- Appear in partner EDO publications, trade publications and/or investor newsletters & podcasts
- Data Snapshot – Every other week, share a compelling data point about Greater Jefferson County on website and other digital channels
- Conduct twice-yearly awareness campaign to existing businesses to make them aware of ThriveED's services

Objective: Retain and Grow Private Sector Investment to support Thrive ED efforts over time

Activities:

- Host up to four Conversations with ThriveED events to raise awareness of ThriveED services and opportunities to become an investor
- Create Investor Spotlight to share every other month (alternate with Community Spotlight)
- Provide monthly update to investors using established metrics
- Present ThriveED Annual Report in October at Annual Meeting of Investors. Share report with existing and prospective investors and other audiences
 - **BOARD:** Work to secure sponsorship of annual meeting speaker and/or related costs
- **BOARD/Investor Relations Committee:** Develop investor relations strategy

Objective: Retain and Grow Public Sector Investment to support Thrive ED efforts over time

Activities:

- Create municipal-specific assistance page on thriveED.org
- Provide monthly update to municipalities using established metrics

- Provide 5-6 education sessions per year. Topics are selected based on survey results to JCEDC Board of Directors
- Promote Housing Development Services program to municipalities
- Create Community Spotlight to share every other month (alternate with Investor Spotlight)
- Present JCEDC Annual Report in May to County Board of Supervisors and share with municipal leaders

IV. Home Buyer Program

OF NOTE: By year end 2022, HUD is mandating that all counselors and agencies that receive HUD support must be certified. New certification guidelines may make certification for Jefferson County impossible. This calendar year, the program is being evaluated and may change, however, at the time of preparing this POW, JCEDC is proceeding as planned.

Objective: *Increase home ownership in Jefferson County*

- Deliver the Down Payment Plus and HOME Consortium down-payment assistance programs according to mandated guidelines
- Remain current on all program guidelines*
- Provide 9 Education seminars
- Assist with at least 32 new home purchases
- Counsel and vet all prospects to ensure compliance with program guidelines
- Market and promote education seminars and use of programs
- Maintain up-to-date website

Objective: *Increase the value of homes in Jefferson County*

- Counsel and refer residents to the HOME consortium post-purchase rehab and the Southern Housing Region Homeowner Rehab programs
- Remain current on all program guidelines
- Promote programs across the County
- Assist at least 10 existing homeowners with funds necessary to upgrade their homes

Objective: *Retain access to HUD Programs for Jefferson County residents.*
(Dodd-Frank mandates that HUD certify all offices delivering home buying

services; and all personnel delivering counseling – must be completed by YE 2022)

V. 2022 Pending Work:

Housing Development Services Program

As of this writing, we are waiting to learn whether WEDC is funding this program. IF it is funded; ThriveED is the program administrator. As such, we will be engaged across the 2-county area with the consultant team to identify municipalities ready to engage with the team; and handling all reporting and administrative tasks necessary for funding to cover program costs. A determination is anticipated by mid-February; and if funded the program will run at least 12 months.

Fort Atkinson Capital Catalyst RLF

As of this writing, we are waiting to learn whether the City will contract with ThriveED to manage its revolving loan fund. This determination will be made in February 2022. The proceeds of the fund are to be expended by September 2022.

Dissolution of Contract with Dodge County

As of this writing, the contract for services is slated to terminate May 9, 2022. Some handover of ongoing work will need to occur; all TBD.